

# Deputies enforcing boating rules on Tahoe

The Washoe County Sheriff's Office will be working to increase awareness about the dangers of boating under the influence on the waters of Lake Tahoe this weekend by participating in a national awareness and enforcement campaign called Operation Dry Water.

Operation Dry Water was launched in 2009 by the National Association of State Boating Law Administration and the U.S. Coast Guard. The campaign's goal is to increase boating safety by reducing drug and alcohol related boating accidents.

The Washoe County Sheriff's Office is one of hundreds of law enforcement agencies throughout the United States that are expected to participate. Other local agencies include the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office, Placer County Sheriff's Office, Nevada Department of Wildlife and the U.S. Coast Guard.

Deputies will be looking for signs of impaired boating and talking to boaters about the dangers of operating a motorized vessel under the influence.

U.S. Coast Guard data from past years shows alcohol use as a primary contributing factor to recreational boater deaths nationwide. Alcohol not only impairs a person's ability to operate a watercraft, it is also known to increase fatigue along with susceptibility to the effects of colder waters such as Lake Tahoe.

The following four tips for responsible boating are from the National Association of Safe Boating Laws Administration and the United States Coast Guard:

- Never boat under the influence of alcohol, drugs or

medication. Alcohol use is the leading contributing factor in recreational boating fatalities.

- Always wear a life jacket while boating. Eighty-five percent of people who drowned in a recreational boating accident were not wearing a life jacket.
- Take a boating safety course. In accidents where the operator's instruction history was known, 73 percent of fatalities occurred on boat where the operator had not received any boating instruction.
- Get a free vessel check every year. These checks reveal life-threatening problems even on boats owned by safe, responsible boaters.

Lake Tahoe recreational boaters are also advised to check the weather before heading out on the water. Weather conditions may change rapidly on the lake so it important to keep up with the most updated forecasts.